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AUTHOR Meissner, Margit
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the final report on the 1988 High School Vocational Interest Exploration Workshop (VIEW) program of the Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools. The 4-week summer program, funded through the Job Training Partnership Act, involved Level 4 special education students, aged 14 to 19. The program provided 1-week minicourses in business, building/grounds maintenance, food services, and auto mechanics/services; offered daily career exploration/career development activities, including social skills instruction; and organized field trips to enable students to observe a variety of persons working in different work sites. Student goals were to improve basic skills, increase self-awareness in relation to different vocational areas, improve understanding of career planning and decision making, and improve work-related social/interpersonal skills. The report describes the program's budget, staff and staff duties, weekly schedules, and program evaluation activities. Recommendations for program improvement are included. (JDD)

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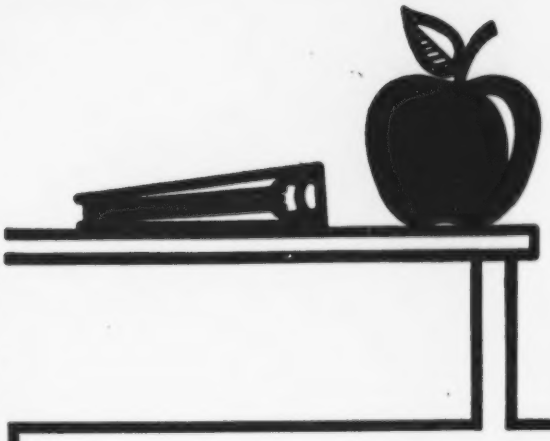
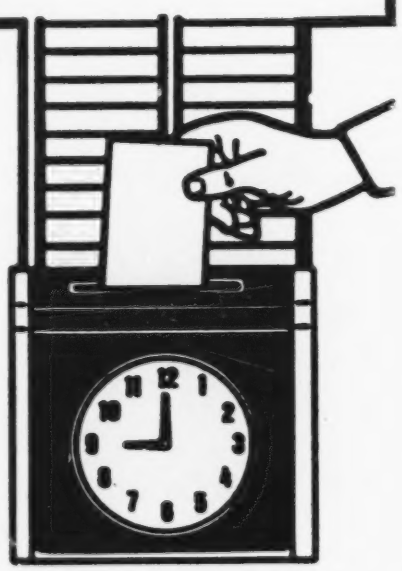


Montgomery County Public Schools Summer VIEW Program



A transition-to-work program for special education students funded through the Job Training Partnership Act

October 1988

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By

Margit Meissner
Transition Coordinator
Department of Special Education and Related Services

This report contains information previously published and coauthored by Margit Meissner, Laura Silberling, Spanish teacher and Barbara Shamp, alternative teacher at Gaithersburg High School

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MCPS staff is grateful to the staff of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) office, under the inspired leadership of Mrs. Carol Rohr, and the Society of Underprivileged and Handicapped Children for enabling special education youngsters to participate in this meaningful summer program.

PURPOSE

This paper is the final report on the summer 1988 Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) High School Vocational Interest Exploration Workshop (VIEW) program. Schools that may wish to replicate the program can obtain detailed plans, schedules, and handouts from Mrs. Margit Meissner, transition coordinator, Department of Special Education and Related Services, at 279-3022.

BACKGROUND

One of the goals of the 1985 MCPS Special Education Initiatives is to improve the transition from school to work of MCPS special education graduates. To implement the goal, the Department of Special Education and Related Services is developing a modular service delivery model that will prepare special education graduates more effectively for work. Such preparation requires increased emphasis on career education, career guidance, and vocational education. It also requires consistent instruction in the social interpersonal skills needed in the work place. In 1986, as part of this thrust, the transition coordinator in the Department of Special Education and Related Services obtained funding from the Montgomery County Private Industry Council for a four-week vocational exploration summer program for 40 JTPA eligible, 14 to 19 year-old Level 4 special education students. The program was held at Gaithersburg High School. Funds were disbursed through the Summer Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP) of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) administered by Montgomery College. In 1987, the program was increased to 120 students, with partial funding from the Society of Underprivileged and Handicapped Children. The students received $3.35 per hour from JTPA for attending the VIEW program. The program was held at Gaithersburg, Richard Montgomery, and Einstein high schools. At the end of the four-week VIEW program, many of these students were placed by SYETP on four-week summer jobs at the same rate of pay. In 1988, the 1987 program was repeated at Gaithersburg, Richard Montgomery and Blair high schools, without the SYETP work component.

GOALS

Program Goals

The program goals remained unchanged. They were to provide:

One-week minicourses in
- business
- building/grounds maintenance
- food services
- auto mechanics/services

Daily career exploration/career development activities, including social skills instruction

Field trips to enable students to observe a variety of persons working in different work sites

Student Goals

The student goals were:

- improve basic skills
- increase self-awareness in relation to different vocational areas
- improve understanding of career planning and decision making
- improve work-related social/interpersonal skills

BUDGET

The budget for the project included the following:

Item	MCPS	JTPA
1 Program Director	X	
3 Building Principals	X	
15 Teachers (20 days x 7 hours)		X
3 Instructional Assistants		X
3 Secretaries (half-time)		X
Instructional Materials		X
3 Building Sites	X	
Equipment		X
Daily Transportation		X
Field Trip Transportation		X

STAFF AND STAFF DUTIES

Staff

Staff was hired as part-time professional and supporting services. This was not an extended year employment activity. Teachers were selected on the basis of their skills, interest, enthusiasm and willingness to work as a member of the team. They had to agree to be flexible and create a learner-centered program in which each student could find some success.

Staff Duties

The program director wrote the proposal, completed all the interagency formalities, obtained Board of Education approval, set up the accounts and guided the planning and the overall program. The initial student registration was also conducted through her office in 1988.

The building principals selected the staff and supervised day-to-day activities.

The five teachers at each site performed the following duties: one taught the business cluster; one the automotive cluster; one the food services cluster; one the career education classes; and one taught social skills and organized the field trips and speakers. At one of the sites, the automotive cluster was replaced by a community work experience cluster. Basic English and mathematics skills were infused into the instructional program, e.g., wheel balancing on cars requires math to interpret amount and positioning of weights. At each site, one of these teachers was designated as site coordinator and program evaluator. The instructional assistants divided their time between the business and the food services clusters.

The secretaries kept all records required by MCPS and JTPA.

Teachers generally taught four or five periods a day. The schedule was flexible because each week was different. Joint planning meetings were held as often as needed, mostly at the end of the day.

WEEKLY SCHEDULES

The basic weekly schedule is illustrated by the example of one of the clusters that follows:

AUTO MECHANICS CLUSTER

PERIOD	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1	Auto Mechanics	Auto Mechanics	FIELD TRIP	Auto Mechanics	Auto Mechanics (Career Center)
2	Career Ed.	Career Ed.		Career Ed.	Auto Mechanics
3	Career Ed.	Auto Mechanics		Auto Mechanics	Auto Mechanics
4	Auto Mechanics	Auto Mechanics		Auto Mechanics	Auto Mechanics
5	- - - - L U N C H - - - -			- - - - L U N C H - - - -	
6	Inter-personal Skills	Field Trip Orientation		Field Trip Orientation	Inter-personal Skills
7	Auto Mechanics	Auto Mechanics		Auto Mechanics	Auto Mechanics

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluation activities included the following:

1. All supervisors developed their own pretest to ascertain students' level of self awareness in relation to the particular job cluster. Some supervisors chose to administer a checklist, and some chose to brainstorm with trainees as a group.

2. Trainees completed a program evaluation after the second, third, and fourth weeks.

3. Students with serious emotional disabilities had individual evaluations completed by their school-based personnel with the input of the VIEW staff.

A summary of evaluation results follows:

Results and Observations

The staff as well as JTPA personnel were extremely pleased with the program. Staff members felt it was productive for them as well as for the students. An unexpected benefit was that nonspecial education teachers realized that they were able to teach special education students. They felt good because they were able to help students feel successful and productive. There was unanimous agreement that the program should continue with a few minor changes.

Most of the students felt equally positive. They liked the variety of activities, and they enjoyed learning new things every week. Most of them stated that they became more aware of career opportunities. A small number of students did not appear to profit from the program due to the severity of their handicapping condition. In these cases, staff questioned whether they possessed the prerequisite skills to be successful in the VIEW program.

During the VIEW program, not all students liked the idea of having to attend all four program clusters, whether they were interested in the topic or not. At the end of the summer, some of them had changed their minds.

ONGOING RECOMMENDATIONS

The VIEW Program should continue and be expanded to other locations. Certainly, the number of applicants proved there is a need for programs such as VIEW.

To ensure implementation of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) concept of PL 94-142, it is suggested that 14 to 15 year-old Level 1-3 students be included in the VIEW program. Participation should be based on a list of prerequisite skills that students should possess to be considered for the VIEW program.

Every effort should be made to accommodate the needs of the more severely handicapped within the confines of the program and to maximize individual success of all students.

Planning for the individual VIEW Programs should include a business advisory committee. Both VIEW and local businesses would benefit from the collaboration.

For smooth functioning, the following tasks should be accomplished before the end of March:

- Establish a business advisory committee
- Create a list of prerequisite job skills for student applicants
- Write job descriptions for positions in all occupational clusters, and staffing requirements
- Plan for a smooth physical plant operation

Such planning would require that a teacher coordinator for each site be hired in January. Since the funding for VIEW through JTPA is not approved until March it would be necessary to pay the coordinators by stipend from MCPS with reimbursement from JTPA to the school system after the project is approved, if such an arrangement is possible.

1988 Recommendations

A less stressful registration process should be created. Although the registration process was smoother for teachers and students this year, it was too time and energy consuming for the project director.

Outstanding VIEW "graduates" should be asked to return the next year to act as aides to the supervisor. At one site, one of last year's outstanding trainees acted as an aide to the landscaping supervisor. This was equally beneficial to the trainee, the other students and the teacher.

Mini field trips should be conducted each week.

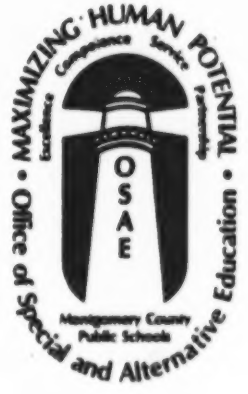
A final evaluation report on each student should be developed by staff.

Home school teachers should provide to each site coordinator more detailed information about students before the start of the program.

VIEW students should perform some type of community service. At one site, students prepared and delivered food to The Shepherd's Table, a program that feeds the needy. This type of activity could be built into each program.

VIEW Replication Time Table
(Assuming that federal funds will be available)

Action	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
Explore interest of schools for offering program	Transition Coordinator									
Obtain BOE permission to submit proposal to funding agency	Transition Coordinator									
Assign school administrator to VIEW		Principal								
Talk to teachers and obtain tentative commitment		Administrator								
Begin to plan broad outline of program with teachers			Administrator and Teachers →							
Assign coordinating teacher				Administrator						
Begin recruiting students in home and neighborhood schools, e.g., hand-outs, visits, call parents					Coordinator teacher →					
Develop & disseminate staff planning tasks and schedules						Administrator/Coordinator →				
Finalize proposal, obtain BOE and funding agency approval and manage administrative								Trans. Coord.		
Obtain pre-registration packets from SYETP and distribute to teachers							Coordinator			
Orient students/parents to registration								Coord.& Teachers		
Supervise registration process									Coord.	
Setup meetings between staff/ parents and obtain student information										Coordinator
Set up accounts									Trans.	Coordinator
Finalize transportation information										Coordinator
Order Supplies							Coordinator →			



Montgomery County Public Schools

Department of Special Education and Related Services
Office of Special and Alternative Education
Hiawatha B. Fountain, Associate Superintendent